

Saint Kitts and Nevis

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under age 15 in Saint Kitts and Nevis are unavailable.⁴⁰³³ However, there are reports that in rural areas children often assist with livestock farming and vegetable production, and some children provide care for family members at the expense of their education.⁴⁰³⁴ Girls often work as domestic servants or child care providers outside of their homes.⁴⁰³⁵ In the past it has been reported that children may be involved in pornography, prostitution, and the distribution of drugs, according to the U.S. Department of State.⁴⁰³⁶

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16 years.⁴⁰³⁷ In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 112 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 100 percent.⁴⁰³⁸ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Primary school attendance statistics are not available for Saint Kitts and Nevis.⁴⁰³⁹ As of 1999, 87 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.⁴⁰⁴⁰ Additionally, UNICEF reports that Saint Kitts and Nevis was recognized for having a well-developed pre-school program along with only fourteen other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴⁰⁴¹ In 2005, Saint Kitts and Nevis also ranked 49 out of 177 countries on the United Nations Human Development Report based on its literacy rate and school enrollment ratios.⁴⁰⁴²

⁴⁰³³ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the “Data Sources and Definitions” section of this report for information about sources used. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children’s work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Data Sources and Definitions” section.

⁴⁰³⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Washington, DC, February 28 2005, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41772.htm>.

⁴⁰³⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰³⁶ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting*, September 2001.

⁴⁰³⁷ Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, *The Education Act*, No. 18 of 1975, (July 31, 1975). See also Embassy and Permanent Mission of Saint Kitts and Nevis, *Facts and Information About Saint Kitts and Nevis*, [online] [cited June 29, 2005]; available from <http://www.stkittsnevis.org/facts.html>.

⁴⁰³⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrollment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005). See also World Bank, <http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/SummaryEducationProfiles/CountryData/GetShowDat>. (Summary Education Profile: Saint Kitts and Nevis; accessed May 6, 2005). For an explanation of gross primary enrollment rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see definition of gross primary enrollment rates in the “Data Sources and Definitions” section of this report.

⁴⁰³⁹ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the “Data Sources and Definitions” section for information about sources used.

⁴⁰⁴⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55> (School life expectancy, % of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005).

⁴⁰⁴¹ UNICEF, *Progress for Children: A Report Card on Gender Parity and Primary Education*, Number 2, New York, April 2005.

⁴⁰⁴² United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2005: International Cooperation at a Crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World*, New York, 2005; available from http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf/HDR05_HDI.pdf. See also, The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, *St. Kitts and Nevis Will Continue to Protect Child Rights*, 2005; available from <http://www.cuopm.com/printableview.asp?articlenumber=642>.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The 2002 Employment of Children (Restriction) Act and the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act set the minimum age for employment at 16 years of age.⁴⁰⁴³ Both acts define a “child” as a person under 16 years of age.⁴⁰⁴⁴ The law provides that persons found guilty of breaking child labor laws will be held liable to a fine of approximately USD 600.⁴⁰⁴⁵

In 2005, the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis ratified ILO Convention 138, Minimum Age Convention.⁴⁰⁴⁶

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Saint Kitts and Nevis. The 2002 Employment of Children (Restriction) Act and the Constitution prohibit slavery, servitude and forced labor.⁴⁰⁴⁷ Although a comprehensive anti-trafficking law does not exist in Saint Kitts and Nevis⁴⁰⁴⁸, trafficking can be prosecuted under various provisions of the Penal Code.⁴⁰⁴⁹ Additionally, prostitution is illegal in Saint Kitts and Nevis.⁴⁰⁵⁰ Procurement of persons by threats, fraud, or administering drugs for prostitution is also illegal.⁴⁰⁵¹ Kidnapping or abduction of a female under the age of 16 for sexual purposes is considered a misdemeanor offense and punishable by up to 2 years of imprisonment.⁴⁰⁵² Engaging in sexual relations with a girl under 14 years is considered a felony, and offenders over 16 years can be sentenced to imprisonment for life.⁴⁰⁵³ Engaging in sexual relations with girls between 14 and 15 years of age is considered a misdemeanor offense, punishable by a prison term of not more than 2 years with or without hard labor. The statute of limitations on these offenses expires one year after the incident.⁴⁰⁵⁴ In 2004, the most recent period for which information is available, officials brought charges in 22 cases of alleged sexual activity with minors such as statutory rape and 5 cases of incest.⁴⁰⁵⁵ The minimum age for enrollment in the Saint Kitts and Nevis security forces is 18.⁴⁰⁵⁶

The Department of Labor of Saint Kitts and Nevis is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.⁴⁰⁵⁷ The Ministry has a “child labor inspector” responsible for monitoring the implementation of ILO Convention

⁴⁰⁴³ ILO NATLEX National Labor Law Database, “Saint Kitts and Nevis Elimination of Child Labor, Protection of Children and Young Persons; accessed September 30, 2005,” available from http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_country=KNA&p_classification=04&p_origin=COUNTRY&p_sortby=SORTBY_COUNTRY.

⁴⁰⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴⁵ US Embassy-Regional Labor Attache, email communication to USDOL official, September 22, 2005.

⁴⁰⁴⁶ ILO, <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratific.pl?C138> (Ratifications by Country; accessed June 16, 2005).

⁴⁰⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Section 5. See also *Constitution of Saint Christopher and Nevis*, 1983, Article 6 (1), (2), (June 22, 1983); available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Kitts/stkitts-nevis.html>.

⁴⁰⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Section 5.

⁴⁰⁴⁹ *Constitution of Saint Kitts and Nevis*.

⁴⁰⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Section 5, Section 5.

⁴⁰⁵¹ *Criminal Code*, Section 2; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/St.Kitts&NevisF.pdf>.

⁴⁰⁵² Ibid., Section 6.

⁴⁰⁵³ Ibid., Section 3.

⁴⁰⁵⁴ Ibid., Section 4.

⁴⁰⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Section 5, Section 5.

⁴⁰⁵⁶ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers Global Report (Caribbean)*, 2004; available from www.child-soldiers.org/regions/country.html?id=180. See also Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, *The Police Act*, No. of 2002, (2002); available from <http://www.stkittsnevis.net/pdf/policeact.pdf>.

⁴⁰⁵⁷ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting*, September 2001. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27917.htm>.

182.⁴⁰⁵⁸ The government reports that the Probation and Child Welfare Unit in the Ministry of Social Development has an active monitoring system with truancy officers.⁴⁰⁵⁹ The government also has a Child Welfare Board consisting of members from the private and public sectors established in support of the 1994 Probation and Child Welfare Board Act.⁴⁰⁶⁰ The Board is responsible for monitoring the rights of children, as well as providing care and protection for children.⁴⁰⁶¹ To further protect children, the government established a 10 pm curfew for unaccompanied children under 16 years of age.⁴⁰⁶² Vigorous action will reportedly be taken to prosecute adults responsible for these children, or adults who encourage children to partake in late night activities that would violate the curfew.⁴⁰⁶³

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis has pledged to place high importance on access to affordable and quality education, teacher training, and regional cooperation to ensure the safe and secure transportation and flow of people as part of the Third Border Initiative Program.⁴⁰⁶⁴ The objective of the initiative is to focus funding and assistance on specific programs designed to enhance cooperation between the United States and the Caribbean States in areas such as education and security, and to combat trafficking in persons and drugs.⁴⁰⁶⁵

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	06/03/2005	✓
Ratified Convention 182	10/12/2000	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

In support of these commitments, the Department of Social and Community Development has implemented a number of education programs that benefit children to assist with community-based training and personal development activities.⁴⁰⁶⁶ Such activities include summer camps designed to provide assistance to an estimated 600 children in Saint Kitts and Nevis; after-school programs targeting 30 children between 6-12 years of age and 20 teenagers at all community centers; and school-to-work transition workshops targeting individuals who did not complete school in order to help them enter the workforce.⁴⁰⁶⁷ The government's comprehensive social development program provides books, uniforms, meals, and pays examination fees for school children.⁴⁰⁶⁸ In 2005, the government also increased the

⁴⁰⁵⁸ CEACR, *Direct Request, Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Saint Kitts and Nevis (Ratification: 2000)*, Geneva, 2004/75th Session 2004; available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org>.

⁴⁰⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶⁰ The Protection Project, <http://www.protectionproject.org/report/kitts.doc> (2005 Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Saint Kitts and Nevis); accessed June 16, 2005). See also ILO NATLEX National Labor Law Database, "Saint Kitts and Nevis Elimination of Child Labor, Protection of Children and Young Persons; accessed September 30, 2005."

⁴⁰⁶¹ The Protection Project, (2005 Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Saint Kitts and Nevis); accessed June 16, 2005).

⁴⁰⁶² Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, "Tough Measures to Improve Public Safety and Security," *The Communication's Unit-Office of the Prime Minister*, May 20, 2005; available from <http://www.cuopm.com/printableview.asp?articlenumber=355>.

⁴⁰⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶⁴ Adam Ereli, *Joint Statement by the United States of America, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Dominican Republic on the Third Border Initiative*, Washington, D.C., January 13 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2004/28136.htm>.

⁴⁰⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶⁶ Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, *2005 Budget Address by St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Denzil L. Douglas*, February 22, 2005; available from <http://www.stkittsnevis.net/news.html>.

⁴⁰⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶⁸ Ibid., 2.

allocation of funds towards post-secondary education to strengthen the Non-Formal Youth Skills Program and Advanced Vocational Education Center to assist children who do not perform well in school.⁴⁰⁶⁹

The Department of Gender Affairs assisted the public with unemployment, technical training, childcare, and the Viola Project, an initiative designed to encourage young mothers to complete their education, which had 17 participants in 2004.⁴⁰⁷⁰

In 2002, the Ministry of Education acquired funding from the World Bank to make secondary schools more accessible to its citizens through the construction of new schools, improvement of the curriculum and quality of teaching, provision of books and other education materials, fellowships, and other programs targeting disadvantaged youth. This program, expected to end in 2008, will encourage greater parental involvement.⁴⁰⁷¹ In 2005, the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis reported that the government will upgrade and modernize its education system by continuing to implement the Basic Education Project and the Secondary Education Development Project to include the construction of a new secondary school, and modernizing the management, content and delivery of secondary education.⁴⁰⁷²

⁴⁰⁶⁹ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁰⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Section 5.

⁴⁰⁷¹ *Project Appraisal Document (OECS) Education Development Program*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., May 15, 2002; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/11/11/000012009_20031111091449/Rendered/PDF/241590EBoard.pdf.

⁴⁰⁷² Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, *2005 Budget Address*.